



WSPRS Rules for State Elected Officials

Washington State Department of Retirement Systems

The rules in this guide apply to state legislators who choose to be covered by WSPRS while in office. The rules that govern all WSPRS members are summarized in the WSPRS Member Handbook.

You are eligible to participate in WSPRS while in office if:

- You were elected to the state legislature, and
- You are a WSPRS member when elected to office.

As a member of the state legislature, you are eligible, but not required, to continue your WSPRS membership while serving in office.

If you are a former WSPRS member but are not a currently active WSPRS member at the time of your election, you are not eligible to resume WSPRS membership. However, you may be eligible to enroll in PERS Plan 2.

How do I continue WSPRS membership?

To continue your WSPRS membership while serving as an elected official you must notify the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) that you are taking a leave of absence to serve in elected office and complete and submit an enrollment form.

For each legislative term during which you wish to remain a member of WSPRS, you must re-enroll at the beginning of that term.

Your membership decision is final:

Once you have established retirement system membership, you must remain a member until you separate from all eligible public employment.

Can I retire from WSPRS while holding elected office?

You must separate from service to become eligible to receive retirement benefits.

How much service credit will I earn?

You receive one month of service credit for every calendar month in which you receive compensation for 70 or more hours.

1. You will not receive more than one month's service credit in a calendar month;
2. Employer contributions will be paid by the legislature;
3. Your contributions will be based on the regular compensation that you would have received had you not served in the legislature;
4. Service and compensation credit will be granted only for periods during which the legislature is in session; and
5. No service credit for service as a legislator will be allowed after you separate from employment with the Washington State Patrol.

WSPRS Rules for State Elected Officials (continued)

Washington State Department of Retirement Systems

What will my retirement benefit be?

Your monthly service retirement benefit is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Months of service} \div 12 \times 2 \text{ percent} \times \text{Average Final Salary} = \text{Yearly benefit}$$

Average Final Salary is the average of your two highest-paid years for WSPRS Plan 1, and the average of your five highest-paid years for WSPRS Plan 2.

The maximum retirement benefit is 75 percent of your average final salary.

How much will I contribute to my retirement fund?

You will contribute a percentage of your salary each month to your retirement plan. Your contributions will be based on the regular compensation that you would have received had you not served in the legislature.

WSPRS contribution rates are set periodically by the Legislature.

What if I am a retired when elected to office?

If you are a retired WSPRS member who is elected to office, you cannot return to WSPRS member status while serving in office. However, you may be eligible for membership in other retirement systems under the following circumstances.

If you were a PERS or TRS member prior to 3/19/76, you have the option of returning to membership in the system you belonged to. See either PERS 1 Rules for State Elected Officials or TRS 1 Rules for State Elected Officials.

If you had less than 15 years of service in WSPRS when you retired and did not retire for disability, you are eligible to enroll in PERS 2. See PERS 2 Rules for State Elected Officials.

How do I enroll?

Contact DRS and provide the following information:

Name

Social Security Number

Address and phone number

Position title and employer

Beginning and ending dates of all elected official service

DRS will verify your service and previous elected official terms of office, and send you an enrollment letter and application. You may also request an estimate of the cost of purchasing credit for previous service.

You can write DRS at:

Department of Retirement Systems

PO Box 48380

Olympia, WA 98504-8380

WSPRS Rules for State Elected Officials (continued)

Washington State Department of Retirement Systems

DRS' central telephone number is toll free 1-800-547-6657 or locally (360) 664-7000.

Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays.

Questions?

To discuss the application of these rules to your specific case, call DRS' Central Reception Desk and ask to speak to the Legislative and Legal Services Unit. Be prepared to provide the beginning and ending dates for all of your elected service.

THIS PUBLICATION IS A SUMMARY

This brochure does not contain a complete description of the law. If there are conflicts between the information contained in this brochure and retirement law, the applicable law will govern.

This publication is available in alternate formats. For information contact DRS Member Publications at (360) 664-7278.